

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims have not been amended herein. For convenience, however, a listing of the currently pending claims follows.

1. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink for inkjet printers, said water-based ink comprising at least a water-insoluble colorant, a block copolymer of a polyvinyl ether structure comprising at least one kind of hydrophilic segments each of which contains acidic groups and at least one kind of hydrophobic segments, water and an alkali, characterized in that the acidic groups in said block copolymer have been neutralized by addition of said alkali in a predetermined amount M that satisfies the following equation:

$$A \leq M \leq (2 \times B)$$

wherein:

A is an amount of said alkali to be added for obtaining an infrared absorption intensity as low as 80% of an upper limit of infrared absorption intensity ascribed to ionic groups to be formed upon addition of an excess amount of said alkali to said block copolymer, and

B is a smallest amount of said alkali to be added to reach said upper limit of infrared absorption intensity.

2. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said acidic groups contained in said block copolymer are carboxyl groups.

3. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said colorant is a pigment.

4. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said colorant is a water-insoluble dye.

5. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein said colorant is a pigment.

6. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 2, wherein said colorant is a water-insoluble dye.